

REMARKS

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 2, 19 and 20 have been amended. Claims 37-40 have been added. No new matter is being presented.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-40 are currently pending in this application.

II. THE REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-2 AND 7-8 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(b) AS BEING ANTICIPATED BY KAETSU.

Independent claims 1 and 2, as amended recite, amongst other elements, "coupling bars coupling cover members which cover the plurality of system units, and fixed to coupling-bar fixing surfaces of said system units by screws so as to couple said system units in said predetermined arrangement."

Kaetsu discloses an optical communication device 100 comprising a housing 10 mounted on columns 12 and arranged in front of a telephone exchange unit M (FIGS. 2 and 3). Kaetsu further discloses that the housing 10 comprises a horizontally elongated rectangular main shelf 14 and a horizontally elongated rectangular sub-shelf 16 arranged below the main shelf 14 (column 3, lines 22-29). Accordingly, as illustrated in FIG. 1 of Kaetsu, the pair of columns 12 couple the main shelf 14 and the sub-shelf 16.

Therefore, the Office Action relies on these pair of columns 12 for a teaching of the coupling bars of the present invention. However, as noted above, columns 12 merely couple the main shelf 14 and the sub-shelf 16.

Amended independent claims 1 and 2, as noted above, recite "coupling bars coupling cover members which cover the plurality of system units, and fixed to coupling-bar fixing surfaces of said system units by screws so as to couple said system units in said predetermined arrangement."

Accordingly, Kaetsu fails to teach or suggest this feature now recited in amended independent claims 1 and 2.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection of independent claims 1 and

2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) should be withdrawn because Kaetsu fails to teach or suggest each feature of independent claims 1 and 2, as amended.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection of claims 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) should be withdrawn because claims 7 and 8 depend upon claims 1 and 2 respectively.

III. THE REJECTION OF CLAIMS 3-6 AND 9-36 UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a) AS BEING UNPATENTABLE OVER KAETSU.

Independent claims 19 and 20, as amended, recite amongst other novel elements "coupling bars coupling cover members which cover the plurality of system units, and fixed to coupling bar-fixing surfaces of said system units by screws so as to couple said system units in said predetermined arrangement."

As discussed above, independent claims 1 and 2, also recite this novel feature amongst others, and Kaetsu does not teach or suggest this novel feature.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent claims 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn because Kaetsu fails to teach or suggest each feature of independent claims 19 and 20, as amended.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection of claims 21-36 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn because these claims depend upon independent claims 19 and 20.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully assert that the rejection of claims 3-6 and 9-18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be withdrawn because these claims depend upon independent claims 1 and 2.

IV. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 12/02/03

By: Douglas X. Rodriguez
Douglas X. Rodriguez
Registration No. 47,269

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501